

Moran Congratulates Emporia State University Lady Hornets Basketball

May 19, 2010

I rise and join my colleagues here today to recognize a group of young women from Kansas who exemplify the meaning of teamwork: the 2010 Emporia State University Lady Hornets, who this year won the NCAA Division II Women's Basketball National Championship.

Teams in my home State of Kansas and across the plains know the Emporia State University Lady Hornets all too well. Under the direction of Head Coach Brandon Schneider, the Lady Hornets have developed into a powerhouse of women's college basketball from the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association, the MIAA.

Heading into the 2009-2010 season, Coach Schneider had led the Lady Hornets to 10 NCAA tournament appearances, six MIAA regular season conference championships, three MIAA tournament conference championships, four NCAA South Central Regional Championships, and two NCAA Division II Final Four appearances. Moreover, at the conclusion of this season, Emporia State University had been ranked as the NCAA Division II Top 25 for the last 13 seasons and has been ranked in the top 10 in weekly polls for a total of 125 weeks since 1998, more than any other program in the country.

So what's the secret to success with this program? Ask anyone at Emporia State University, and they will point out that the young women are more than just a collection of basketball players. As the 2009-2010 Women's Basketball Media Guide explains: ``Being part of a women's basketball program is special because not only do the Lady Hornets come together to win games on the court, but they also come together as a family off the court."

Even while players have been selected to the All-MIAA team, the MIAA-All Tournament team and even the Division II All-American Team, being a part of the Lady Hornets is not about the individual accolades, it is about teamwork, and teamwork has been their recipe for success.

Expectations were high for the 2010 season. And the Lady Hornets did not disappoint. They began the season by winning 19 of their first 20 games and were ranked as high as number four in the national polls. However, they lost three of their last five games, including the second round upset in the MIAA tournament in Kansas City. Their season seemed to be heading off track. Most teams with such high hopes and high expectations would have easily lost that hope, but the Lady Hornets were determined to overcome these setbacks and never let their dream of becoming a national championship team die.

After a quiet trip home from Kansas City to Emporia following the loss, and a little time together, the team refocused on their ultimate goal and traveled to Canyon, Texas, for the South Central Regional. Emporia State University dominated the regional and left West Texas with a ticket to the Elite 8 where the Hornets would next meet some of their fiercest competition of the year.

After wins against the number 3-ranked Michigan Technological University Huskies and the number 1-ranked Gannon University Lady Knights, the Hornets headed to the national championship game. On March 26, 2010, the Lady Hornets defeated the Fort Lewis Skyhawks by a score of 65-53 to capture their first-ever women's basketball championship.

Emporia State University athletes, coaches, students, alumni, faculty, and fans have much to be proud of after a season of hard work and dedication. After appearances in six national championship games in four sports, this is the first national championship in any sport since being crowned the 1984 MIAA Women's Softball National Champions. But this victory is special because it is a testament to the power of teamwork. Good teams are able to overcome adversity, and that is exactly what the 2010 Emporia State University Lady Hornets managed to do en route to a national championship.

Congratulations to the Lady Hornets team, seniors Cassondra Boston, Jamie Augustyn, Lacy Corker, and Sophia Lenard; juniors Ashley Ferrell, Negesti Taylor, Kayla Krueger, Dava Logsdon, and Alli Volkens; sophomore Brittney Miller; and freshmen Rachel Hanf, Jocelyn Cummings, and Kelsey Newman. Congratulations to the ESU coaches, head coach Brandon Schneider and assistant coaches Jory Collins and Kiel Unruh.

Also, ESU athletic director Kent Weiser and ESU president Michael Lane deserve credit for all of their support of the team, as does assistant athletic director for media relations Donald Weast. Finally, congratulations to the Emporia State fans, some of the most dedicated in all of

college basketball who have waited a long time for this accomplishment.

Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join me in commending the outstanding accomplishments of the 2010 Emporia State University Lady Hornets, a truly great team of players who know there is no "I" in team. Please join me in supporting H. Res. 1292 today.